


*Board of County Commissioners*  
INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 10, 2003  
TO: Board of County Commissioners  
FROM: Dan Winchester, Commissioner  
SUBJECT: Tired Creek Reservoir update



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Attached for your information is a summary of the status of the subject project as of June 2, 2003. I have also attached the letter I sent to Grady County Commission on January 23, 2003, and three newspaper articles regarding this project. The article dated May 28, 2003, about a meeting that Georgia Governor Perdue had with Grady County officials, indicates that the Governor is very much on board with this project and would like to see it move ahead.

We have received no response from Grady County to our January 23 letter.

Recommendation: Ask the County Attorney to bring back an agenda item at the June 24, 2003, meeting specifically addressing the Tired Creek Reservoir issue and including legal recommendations on the best way to proceed to protect Leon County interests.

Copy to: County Administrator

"Safety is No Accident"

## **Tired Creek Reservoir Summary**

**June 2, 2003**

Members of the Grady County Commission along with Representatives Wallace Shollar and Hugh Broome and Senator John Bulloch met with Governor Sonny Perdue last week to discuss the Tired Creek Reservoir. The Governor has suggested that the County apply for a One Georgia grant for up to \$500,000 to continue the permitting and planning process. It is the opinion of the Grady County Commission, based on conversations with the Governor, that the grant will be looked upon favorably. Governor Purdue serves as Chairman of the Board for One Georgia.

One Georgia grants are typically awarded for economic development projects and the Governor noted that this project has the potential to serve as a great economic stimulus to southwest Georgia. The Governor asked for a business plan detailing development options associated with the proposed lake. Development of areas adjacent to the lake is an integral part of this project and the County is looking at land planning consultants with expertise in community development. The grant is due September 1, 2003. A funding decision on the grant may be made as soon as mid-October. Tommy Craig, the County's reservoir consultant, will be coordinating the preparation of the grant. The County will have to dip into its diminishing contingency funds in order to continue paying Mr. Craig and the other consultants who are working on this project.

Grady County has hired Russell Fowler to serve as a timber consultant on the Tired Creek property. The Georgia Forestry Commission has identified more than 400 acres on which mature timber is in need of thinning and Mr. Fowler will oversee the harvesting of this timber. Revenue from the timber harvest will be used to fund grant preparation and permitting activities.

Methodist Church Minister the Rev.  
Richard Soper and U.S. Congressman  
Sanford Bishop's aide Michael Bryant.

5/28/03

# Perdue "embraces dream" of Tired Creek lake project

by Randolph H. Wind  
Editor & Publisher

Saying he "embraced the dream" of the long sought Tired Creek reservoir, Gov. Sonny Perdue pledged his support for the project during a meeting with Grady County officials and the legislative delegation last Thursday.

Grady County Commission Chairman Elwyn Childs, Vice Chairman Bobby Burns, Commissioner Charles Norton, Administrator Rusty Moyer, Chamber of Commerce

Executive Director Rick McCaskill along with Representatives Wallace Sholar and Hugh Broome and Senator John Bulloch met with the Republican governor in Atlanta last week.

"The governor had the best opportunity to say no and close the door on the project forever, but instead of closing the door he opened one," Vice Chairman Burns said during a called meeting Tuesday to brief Commissioners Al Ball and Benny Prince, who did not make the trip, on the outcome of the

session with Perdue.

"Frankly, I was surprised, but pleasantly so," Burns added.

Commissioner Norton described the meeting as "positive" and he, too, believes the governor will support the county in the development of the 1,200 acre recreational lake.

According to the officials present, Gov. Perdue suggested the county apply for a One Georgia grant of up to \$500,000 which could be used as "seed money" to continue the permit-

► Please see PERDUE, Page A2



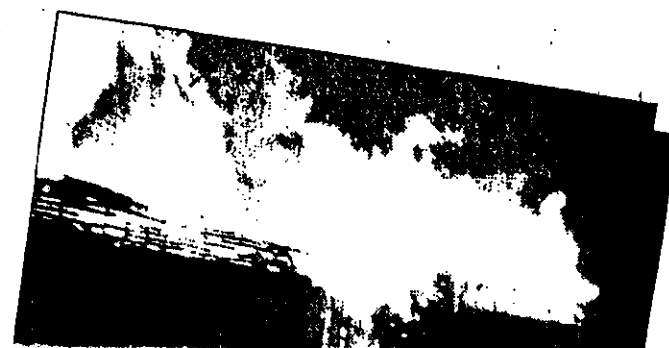
Gov. Sonny Perdue

## And the answer is... August 11, 1980

Jim Wyatt  
Staff Writer

A few weeks ago The Messenger's Looking Back scav-

The next informal inquiry was made to Mr. Bobby Wind, who had been the first person to tell (possibly tall) stories about games and times in the old



the budget to ease the utility rate hikes.

"I realize the predicament city is in. We owe more for letting folks go because need a job, but I am opposing giving raises when it hurts much," Thrower said.

Norman Johnson, 1 Washington Dr., also knew the city was "struggling for money," but he encouraged city officials to look at ways to reduce expenses.

He insisted the city develop a plan to help senior citizens who are on fixed income. "They can't afford the cost now and if it goes up as they sure can't pay it," said.

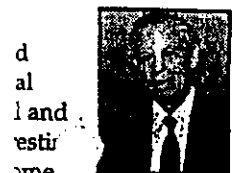
Johnson said his 100-year-old mother struggled with the budget, and he wondered what would happen when she could no longer afford to pay the utility bill. "Is the city going to cut her off?" he asked.

Johnson also complained the city's garbage collection, which is going up from \$15.25 per month, is a high.

Brian Helms, a new resident in Cairo, said utility rates are high.

"I've never liked it and I don't like it now. The city has gestured, if not every day, but I don't think they will employ that the 'You can't do it' mentality."

Attachment # 2  
Page 3 of 8



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extensions altogether, but he says there are  
ment, it would be the responsibility of the

## Governor "opens door" to additional funding for Tired Creek

►PERDUE, from Page 1

ting process.

Commissioners believe from what the governor said the grant would be looked on favorably. Perdue, as governor, serves as the chairman of the board of One Georgia.

Applications for the next round of One Georgia grants are due by September 1, and local officials are already beginning work on the application process.

Previously, One Georgia funds have been used primarily for economic development projects, but the governor indicated to commissioners last week that the proposed Tired Creek project would be a great economic stimulus to the southwest Georgia region.

Representative Hugh Broome commented to county leaders that it appeared to him the gov-

ernor had redefined the criteria for One Georgia grants in the meeting last week.

Gov. Perdue insisted the county provide him, along with the One Georgia application, a business plan for the lake project.

"He doesn't want money just spent on a dam, he wants to see Tired Creek developed," Burns commented in regard to the business plan.

Commissioners will have to dip into shrinking contingency funds to continue paying attorney and consultant Tommy Craig and other consultants who will help develop the project business plan.

Commissioner Ball indicated he would support the use of contingency funds if he could be assured that in the end the project would benefit all of Grady County and that would funds

were available the contingency monies would be replaced.

County Administrator Moye estimates it will cost about \$50,000 to cover all costs related to the work needed for the grant application and accompanying business plan.

Proceeds from the sale of timber the county plans to cut in the coming weeks will also be rolled into the project and will be used in the short-term to pay back funds "borrowed" from contingency, according to Moye.

Moye met with county timber consultant Russell Fowler Tuesday and plans are being made to begin thinning the 2,000 acre tract of mature timber.

On a motion offered by Commissioner Norton and seconded by Commissioner Prince, the commission authorized Moye to continue the process.

"With just a few words last

week, the governor could have put this project to rest, but he didn't," Commissioner Burns commented.

Perdue's support of the project comes on the heels of former Gov. Roy Barnes pledge of support for the project made last year. Barnes had agreed to seek \$10 million in state funds for the project.

Gov. Perdue indicated last Thursday he would depend on the county's legislative delegation to help him make the project a reality.

Rep. Sholar and Rep. Broome have consistently gone to bat for the county on Tired Creek and commissioners said Tuesday they were pleased that newly elected Senator John Bulloch had indicated his support of the project to the governor.

## iry causes 1 search of date

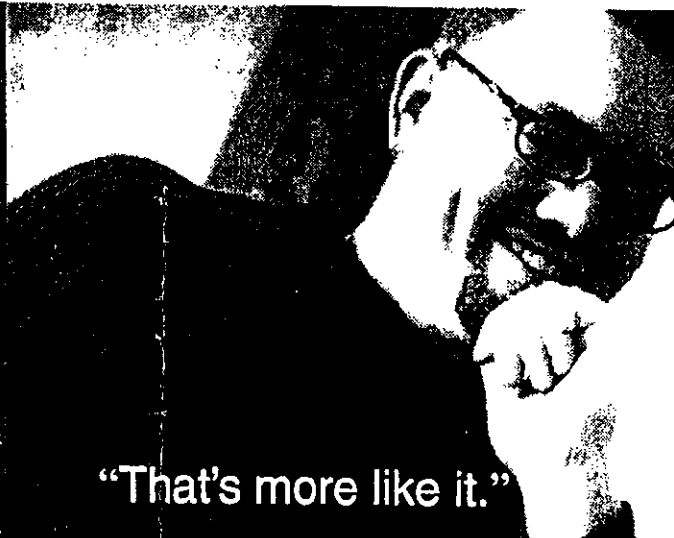
ing The Messenger to ask if we could provide the date! We couldn't!

Finally, your reporter called the agency he should have called first - the Cairo Fire Department, where a cheerful and friendly fireman checked records and came up with the correct answer in short order. Thank you, firemen!

The firemen may not have been able to save the old gym, but they saved this reporter - I was beginning to believe that old gym and its burn was a figment of Cairo's communal imagination.

And, as it usually happens, as soon as the firemen solved the problem, several other people did, too, and I received the date from multiple sources (Carol, Ed, Nora, Annelle) within a couple of days. Thanks to all of you who, at least, tried to help.

Well, it seems that answering this crucially important question tied up local telephone exchanges and provided an engrossing divertissement from the humdrum normal routine for several citizens for several



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# Commissioners to discuss Tired Creek with Gov. Perdue

Randolph H. Wind  
Editor & Publisher

The Grady County Board of Commissioners is scheduled to meet with Gov. Sonny Perdue on Thursday, May 22, to discuss state support for the proposed

## Tired Creek reservoir

Senator John Bulloch has scheduled the meeting with the governor and County Administrator Rusty Moye has extended invitations to Representatives Wallace Sholar and Hugh Broome to join the

## delegation in Atlanta

Former governor Roy Barnes had pledged state support of the project, but those promises were dashed when Perdue ousted him at the polls last November. Meanwhile, the commission continues to pay \$12,500 month-

ly for the services of Covington attorney Tommy Craig, who is considered an expert in successfully gaining permits for projects like the Tired Creek reservoir.

For the past two months the commission have been hesitant to continue Craig's services due to the uncertainty of the funding for the project.

Commissioner Bobby Burns commented Tuesday that to cut it off now would be ridiculous.

Commissioners expressed hope that Perdue will pledge state funding for the project in the interest of economic development for this region as well as a recreational enhancement for


the citizens of southwest Georgia.

"We'll have a pretty good idea where we're going after the 22nd," Commissioner Charles Norton commented, referring to the conference with the governor.

Commissioners also hope to meet with Georgia Speaker of the House Terry Coleman the last week of this month. Representative Wallace Sholar is working to secure an appointment with the speaker so that the commission can brief him on the project's current status.



Gov. Sonny Perdue



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# Demanding Leon County official wants update on Tired Creek project

## Commissioners to meet with consultant in Atlanta

Randolph M. Ward  
Editor & Publisher

A Leon County, Florida county commissioner is very interested in the proposed development of the Tired Creek reservoir and

has written a letter to the county commission demanding to be updated on the project.

However, on Tuesday, County Commissioner Charles Norton, wondered out loud if Leon County Commissioner Dan Winchester was as concerned about the Ochlocknee River and river basin back in 1985 when the production of electricity at the Lake Talquin dam began and "bout sucked the river dry."

"We've been as cooperative with him as we can and when we've had something to share with him and other Florida officials we have, but what I'd like to know is if the same studies we're being required to do were done when they started generating electricity at Lake Talquin dam?" Norton asked.

Norton, an avid fisherman, says the Ochlocknee River has not been the same since. He said just a few weeks ago the river was out into the woods, but as soon as they fired up those generators the river receded.

"That just doesn't make sense with the sap down and the amount of rain we've had this winter. The river should still be in the woods. Let's ask him (Winchester) about that," Norton said.

Winchester, officials from the Tall Timbers Research Station and other Florida officials met with the county's consultant on the Tired Creek project, Attorney Tommy Craig, on Oct. 3, 2002. At that time, Craig briefed the Florida officials on the county's plans.

Commissioners insist that there is nothing new to report to the Leon County commission.

"Until we know if Gov. Perdue is going to support the project, we don't even know if there's a project," Commissioner Bobby Burns said.

Commissioners are meeting with Craig in Atlanta, Thursday, while attending the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia legislative forum.

Craig has been working on a proposed funding plan for the commission to present to Gov. Perdue sometime next month.

Winchester, who has been appointed by the Leon County Board of Commissioners as the board liaison to Grady County, in his letter demanded that Leon County participate in the "decision-making processes" and weigh in on the decision made by the relevant permitting agencies.

He also wrote that any harvesting of timber at the 2,000-acre site "should not be done in isolation of other land use issues and would appear premature, based on the complete lack of



**COUNTY** commissioner Charles Norton wants to know whether or not tests were done to determine the effect on the Ochlocknee River from electric power generation at the Lake Talquin dam.

information provided to Leon County.

The Florida elected official also requested a response to his inquiries and concerns by the first of this month.

Commissioners on Tuesday decided it would be best if consultant Tommy Craig responded to Winchester's Jan. 23 letter.

"After all, he knows more about this project than any of us," Commissioner Bobby Burns said.

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January 23, 2003

The Honorable Elwyn Childs, Chairman  
Grady County Board of Commissioners  
250 North Broad Street  
Cairo, Georgia 31728

Re: Proposed Tired Creek Reservoir

Dear Chairman Childs:

As a member of the Leon County Board of County Commissioners and the designated Board liaison to Grady County, I am writing to request your assistance in regard to the proposed impoundment of the waters of Tired Creek and the associated reservoir currently under consideration for construction in Grady County. Leon County has a significant interest in this project as Tired Creek is an important tributary of the Ochlockonee River, and is thus a source of water for several streams and lakes in Leon County, including Lake Talquin, as well as the Ochlockonee Bay estuarine system. As I am sure you know, the quality of the Ochlockonee Basin waterbodies is in decline, in part due to the flow from the Georgia portion of the river, and we are very concerned about activity that would contribute to the increasing stress on these waterbodies.

On October 3, 2002, representatives of Leon County, Tall Timbers Research Station, and I, met with the Grady County project consultant, Tommy Craig, and his team of consultants, to review the status of the project and to make explicit our concerns over the potential impacts of the Tired Creek project on the water quantity and quality of the Ochlockonee River and associated waterbodies. Our hope and intention were, and still are, to create a working relationship with Grady County in which Leon County can be an active participant in the proposed project. We left the meeting anticipating that Mr. Craig would keep our Leon County Water Quality Consultant, Dr. Sean McGlynn, advised and informed so that we can have input into the environmental studies and other steps necessary before the project can be permitted.

We have heard nothing since the meeting on October 3, 2002, and thus feel the need to request your assistance. To be more specific, we need to know the status of the following:

- (1) *Georgia state funding and approval.* With the change in administration in Atlanta, it is not clear to us whether the project will even go forward as the funding for the initial stages has been promised, but not yet delivered, by outgoing Governor Barnes. Could you please advise us as to whether the new administration also intends to support and fund the project, or in the alternative, whether Grady County has decided not to proceed?

Honorable Elwyn Childs, Chairman  
January 23, 2003  
Page Two

(2) *Environmental studies.* A number of environmental studies will be required to determine the impacts of this project on water flow and quality. We understood at the October 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting that these studies were not yet designed or underway, and we requested the opportunity to have input into their design and the selection of the researchers who would conduct the study. We have not received any information and would appreciate an update on the status of the studies and the other questions and issues we raised during the meeting on October 3, 2002. It is imperative that Leon County and others who will be affected by this project have the opportunity to participate in the study design and execution.

(3) *Permitting process.* We have requested that we be kept informed on the status of any permitting efforts that Grady County may initiate in regard to the project. To date, we have not received any information on permitting applications or proceedings, and thus presume that none are underway. If there is any permitting activity in the works (or completed), please provide us with the relevant documents and ask Mr. Craig to contact Dr. McGlynn and brief him on the status. Again, because of the potential impacts to the waters of the Ochlockonee River system, it is very important that Leon County have an opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes and weigh in on the decision made by the relevant permitting agencies.

(4) *Silviculture activities.* It has come to my attention that Grady County may be pursuing timber harvesting in anticipation of the reservoir being constructed. This should not be done in isolation of other land use issues and would appear premature, based on the complete lack of information provided to Leon County.

I continue to hope that our two governments can work together to ensure that the project does not contribute to declining water quality in the Ochlockonee River basin. If you wish to speak to me personally, please feel free to call me at 850/487-1157 (Commission office) or 850/562-2001 (business office) at any time. I would very much appreciate your response to my inquiries and concerns by the first week of February.

Sincerely,

LEON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Dan Winchester, Commissioner  
Board Liaison to Grady County

cc: Charlie Norton, Grady County Commissioner  
Rusty Moye, Grady County Administrator  
David Struhs, Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Herb Thiele, County Attorney for Leon County  
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